United Nations A/C.4/52/SR.14

General Assembly
Fifty-second session

Official Records

Distr.: General
16 February 1998
English
Original: Russian

Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 14th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 10 November 1997, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Mapuranga ..... (Zimbabwe)

Contents

Agenda item 88: Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

97-82658 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 88: Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects (A/52/209 and A/C.4/52/L.9)

1. **The Chairman** drew attention to the report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (A/52/209) and a number of related communications.

2. **Mr. Zaki** (Egypt), speaking as Rapporteur of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and introducing the report of the Special Committee, said that the report centred on important themes such as principles for the conduct of peacekeeping operations, mechanisms for consultations, personnel and reform issues, and a number of practical suggestions for the planning and conduct of such operations.

3. The Special Committee considered that it was essential for the United Nations to have the means to continue to maintain international peace and security through effective planning, deployment and management in current and future peacekeeping operations. Such operations should not be used as a substitute for addressing the root causes of conflict coherently and with the appropriate instruments. Consideration must be given to ways in which those efforts could continue without interruption after the termination of a peacekeeping operation.

4. On the issue of consultations involving the Security Council, troop-contributing countries and the Secretariat, the Special Committee encouraged the rigorous, timely and systematic implementation of the current arrangements, which did not preclude consultations in other forms.

5. Bearing in mind the increasingly difficult and dangerous conditions in which peacekeeping operations were conducted, the Special Committee had requested the Secretary-General to consider the possibility of improving the method of selecting and preparing senior military commanders. On the issue of death and disability compensation, the Special Committee recommended the extension of the principle of a uniform and standardized rate of compensation to be applied to all observers and troops. It was well known that the Fifth Committee had adopted a resolution to that effect.

6. The Special Committee urged the Secretary-General to address the issue of the use of loaned and seconded personnel within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and noted that use should be made of such personnel with due regard to the importance of maintaining transparency, as well as the widest possible geographical representation, over limited and specific periods. It was to be noted that the Secretary-General had included in his reform proposals a measure concerning the elaboration of a plan to phase out the use of gratis personnel.

7. On the issue of reform efforts, the Special Committee considered that those efforts should include the development of appropriate structures, at Headquarters and in the field, for periods of both low- and high-intensity activity in United Nations peacekeeping. The Special Committee encouraged the Secretariat to continue its efforts to enhance the transparency, efficiency and responsiveness of its procurement procedures. It also urged the Department to develop a coherent strategy for logistic support for peacekeeping operations. Realizing the fundamental importance of rules of engagement, the Special Committee encouraged the Secretariat to discuss those rules with prospective troop contributors before their finalization. The Special Committee also encouraged the Secretariat to brief those countries on proposed concepts of operations as they were being developed.

8. With regard to humanitarian issues, the Special Committee, while emphasizing the need to differentiate between peacekeeping operations and humanitarian assistance, considered that peacekeeping operations could contribute to the creation of a secure environment for the effective delivery of humanitarian relief assistance. With respect to civilian police, the Committee considered that, in conducting peacekeeping operations, care should be taken to ensure that police and military tasks were clearly differentiated. It also considered that civilian police could play a major role in restoring civil order and supporting the rule of law, as well as in fostering civil reconciliation.

9. The Special Committee continued to believe that United Nations standby arrangements were a key element in improving the effectiveness and rapid-deployment capacity of peacekeeping operations. The Committee expressed concern over continuing delays in the reimbursement of troop contributors, which caused hardship to all troop- and equipment-contributing countries, especially developing countries, and adversely affected future contributions to peacekeeping operations.

10. The Special Committee recommended that the United Nations should give particular attention to strengthening the capacity of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in the field of conflict prevention, management and resolution, as well as to mobilizing assistance, particularly logistic and financial support, for African peacekeeping contingents and the activities of OAU in that domain.

11. Finally, the Special Committee recognized that 1998 would mark the fiftieth anniversary of peacekeeping and recommended that the event should be commemorated by the United Nations.

12. **Mr. Miyet** (Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations) briefly reviewed the activities of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Currently, approximately 19,000 soldiers and civilian police officers were taking part in 15 peacekeeping operations. In 1997, two observer missions had been successfully concluded: with the help of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL), civil peace had been restored there; while the group of military observers attached to the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA) had played a crucial role in the disarmament and demobilization of the former insurgents. The international community could take pride in the achievements of both missions.

13. The aforementioned operations were one part of United Nations peacekeeping activities. The Department was also preparing for a possible operation in Sierra Leone, and for an expansion of the existing missions in Tajikistan and Western Sahara. A great deal of work had been carried out on preparing for three operations in the Great Lakes region that had not, in the end, been deployed. The Department was working closely with regional organizations to prevent and resolve conflicts, particularly in Africa. It was also providing administrative and logistical support for political and humanitarian missions being carried out by other Secretariat departments.

14. The Department was also engaged in enhancing the international community's capacity to respond to future conflicts. One of the components of that work had to do with the activities of the Training Unit. In 1997, three simulation exercises had been carried out, in Brazil, El Salvador and Zimbabwe. The Training Unit had placed special emphasis on peacekeeping activities in Africa, where a peacekeeping seminar had been held in Ghana and a conference in Dakar. The Department was planning to convene a meeting in the near future for all Member States, specifically on enhancing Africa's peacekeeping capacity.

15. The Fifth Committee's approval of the budget for the Logistics Base at Brindisi had given a fillip to the Department's efforts to improve the efficiency of its logistic support for operations. In particular, it would make it possible to inventory the material and equipment that had accumulated there from completed missions, prepare two start-up kits containing assets and supplies required to support a 100-man mission headquarters for the first three months of an operation, and also make more rational use of the available resources.

16. In light of the concerns expressed by the Secretary-General and Member States, the Secretariat was actively supporting the enhancement of the international community's rapid deployment capacity. Sixty-seven Member States were currently participating in the standby arrangements system. A major event in that context had been the establishment in Denmark of the planning component of the standby high readiness brigade. Also, the Secretariat had further developed plans for the establishment of a rapidly deployable mission headquarters, although those plans must be considered in the overall context of the Department's staffing requirements.

17. There had been a recent tendency in the press and elsewhere to downplay the significance of United Nations peacekeeping activities and to equate the activities of the Department with just the number of operations under way or the number of peacekeepers deployed. However, the significance of those activities obviously went well beyond the bare numbers. In that connection, he emphasized the importance of understanding the crucial role that United Nations peacekeeping activities could continue to play in the future. At times, some Member States had responded with reluctance to the prospect of deploying new operations, expressing doubts as to whether the Organization was capable of bringing them to a successful conclusion. But one wondered how was it possible not to act in the face of current conflicts, which frequently had grave implications for the stability of neighbouring States. In that context, it should be noted that the tendency towards relying on regional and subregional organizations for conflict resolution had produced beneficial results when there was a close and trusting working relationship. Unquestionably, such organizations could play a positive or even crucial role in some situations, but sometimes they faced structural, financial or planning limitations even more acute than those faced by the United Nations. Also, the parties to a conflict might question their impartiality or even, for historical or political reasons, the advisability of their involvement. Burden-sharing with regional organizations also brought new responsibilities for the international community. Nevertheless, it was clear that the new partnership afforded significant opportunities and must be enhanced, while bearing in mind that utilizing the potential of regional organizations could not be a panacea for the difficult problems facing peacekeeping.

18. It was essential for the mandates of United Nations operations to be as clear as possible and for them to be matched with adequate resources. Such operations were

instruments of enormous potential, but they must be handled with precision, understanding and appreciation.

19. In the context of his reform programme for the United Nations, the Secretary-General had sought to reinforce his Special Representatives' authority over all aspects of the United Nations presence in a country and favoured greater delegation of authority and accountability to the field. Another planned measure was the gradual phasing out of gratis personnel, with the exception of those performing specialized functions. Although that development would unquestionably be beneficial in the long term, over the short and medium term it would pose very considerable management problems. In February 1997, for example, 134 gratis military personnel had been serving within the Department, whereas it had been allocated financial resources for only 17 military posts. The Department must be provided with financial resources corresponding to its real personnel requirements. Future needs in peacekeeping could not be predicted accurately, but at the same time experience had shown that it was too late to build the Secretariat's capacity when a crisis was already erupting. The relevant United Nations bodies must do everything possible to strengthen both the Department itself and the structural foundations for future peacekeeping operations.

20. **Mr. Gambari** (Nigeria) said that, while most Member States expected the United Nations to play a leading role in international peacekeeping, some – particularly those advocating a shift to a more preventive role – would prefer to see it less involved in such operations. His delegation reaffirmed, however, that the achievement of international peace and security remained the collective goal and the *raison d'être* of the United Nations.

21. At the present stage of its history, the United Nations was undergoing a series of fundamental reforms. His delegation had always maintained that the reform of the Organization would be incomplete unless the General Assembly was strengthened. The work of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations should contribute to the enhancement of the General Assembly's authority. The Special Committee had the mandate to undertake a comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects. His delegation welcomed the extremely useful work accomplished by the Special Committee, whose report (A/52/209) contained proposals, recommendations and conclusions concerning issues such as the guiding principles, definitions and implementation of peacekeeping operations' mandates; consultations between troop-contributing countries and the Security Council; the enhancement of the Organization's capacity for peacekeeping; and cooperation with regional arrangements, and other matters. The Special Committee had considered practical steps to ensure that future peacekeeping operations would have a sound logistical and predictable financial basis. That was the only way to apply a coherent and integrated strategy for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts that would include preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and post-conflict peace-building.

22. Experience had shown that a timely response to conflicts was crucial to the success of peacekeeping operations. His delegation had followed with interest recent initiatives by a group of countries to formulate a mechanism that could assist the United Nations in responding quickly to crises. The aim was to cut down drastically the interval between the authorization of a peacekeeping operation and its actual deployment. His delegation re-emphasized, however, its preference that consideration of all the proposals for rapid deployment should be made within the context of the existing standby arrangements. Furthermore, any project in the area of maintenance of international peace and security should enjoy as wide a geographical spread in personnel composition as possible. All Member States should have the opportunity to contribute to decisions on a matter of such importance.

23. The United Nations could not successfully carry out its peacekeeping operations, or any of its functions, without adequate financing. His delegation would therefore untiringly urge all Member States to honour their obligations under the Charter of the United Nations by paying their dues in full, on time and without conditions. As a consequence of the financial difficulties of the United Nations resulting from the failure of some Member States to pay their dues, many troop-contributing countries, including Nigeria, were owed substantial amounts of arrears in reimbursement. The situation must be corrected without any further delay.

24. While the Organization's financial situation grew increasingly worrying, the challenges of peacekeeping, peacemaking and peace-building were laying an ever-growing burden on the United Nations. In that regard his delegation fully supported the Organization's constant search for ways to cooperate meaningfully with regional organizations. Cooperation in the West African subregion between the United Nations and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group in tackling the Liberian conflict had worked very well. The same spirit of cooperation prevailed in resolving the situation in Sierra Leone. Although regional organizations and other arrangements should work hand in hand with the United Nations to help resolve conflicts, the framework for such cooperation should be carefully worked out, so that any misunderstanding was avoided. The United Nations had

primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, but that function was not exclusive to the Organization. The framework for cooperation should therefore take into account the fact that the United Nations remained the focal point for the maintenance of international peace and security and should consequently not be relegated to the background by any regional or multilateral arrangements. On the other hand, regional organizations or arrangements which had demonstrated enough resolve in managing particular crises and required international assistance through the United Nations deserved every encouragement. The Monitoring Group's experience in resolving the Liberian crisis was a typical example, although international financial and logistical support for that initiative had not been adequate, either during the initial stage or subsequently. It would be encouraging if, in their efforts to resolve evolving crises, regional organizations and arrangements received the necessary financial and logistical support, through the United Nations, throughout the span of a peacekeeping operation.

25. **Mr. Duval** (Canada) strongly endorsed the consensus report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (A/52/209), with its proposals, recommendations and conclusions, and urged all Member States to adopt draft resolution A/C.4/52/L.9 by consensus.

26. His delegation believed that the Special Committee's deliberations had contributed to substantive progress in some areas, particularly in laying the foundation for the subsequent adoption of a uniform scale of compensation payments in cases of death or disability. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations had made encouraging progress in implementing the new Field Assets Control System, which had been developed practically on a shoestring. Positive results had been achieved by the work of the civilian police selection assistance teams in the pre-deployment evaluation of national police contingents and by the seminars for national peacekeeping trainers. The number of Member States participating in the standby arrangements system had grown. Such initiatives had contributed to an improvement in the Organization's ability to conduct peacekeeping operations. On the other hand, there had been a lack of progress in other important areas; for example, there was a continuing backlog of peacekeeping reimbursements caused by the non-payment of peacekeeping assessments.

27. In its future work the Special Committee could focus on such crucial issues as the structure and organization of the Department and ways and means of providing the necessary financial resources to underpin its operations. The Department had conducted an internal review of its organization, but there was little visible indication of any progress so far. Furthermore, following the decision to reduce drastically the future employment of gratis personnel, Member States would be obliged to choose between funding the Department on a stable basis or witnessing the rapid disappearance of all the improved capabilities developed over the past few years.

28. The level of United Nations peacekeeping activity had declined over the past three years and no new mission had been authorized for nearly two. As a result, some had argued that "the sun had set" on United Nations peacekeeping and that such operations should be undertaken either by regional organizations or by "coalitions of the willing". Canada did not share that view. For reasons of impartiality, political management and resources, it continued to favour broad-based United Nations operations. The Organization should maintain its capability so that it could respond rapidly and effectively to any situation that might arise.

29. **Mr. Santaputra** (Thailand), speaking on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, said that United Nations peacekeeping operations were an important element in the maintenance of international peace and security. While fully supporting United Nations peacekeeping missions and considering them useful, the non-aligned countries believed that peacekeeping operations could contribute to solving conflicts, but that they could not and should not be permanent measures. Decisions to establish peacekeeping operations should be based on the principles set out in paragraphs 40, 41 and 42 of the 1997 report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (A/52/209).

30. Since the spring 1997 session of the Special Committee, there had been positive developments in the field of United Nations peacekeeping, particularly with regard to the issues of loaned or gratis personnel and the rate of compensation of death and disability. The non-aligned countries welcomed the adoption of General Assembly resolution 51/243, requesting the Secretary-General to phase out the use of gratis personnel, and called for the implementation of that resolution in all its aspects as soon as possible. They also welcomed the progress made in establishing a fair and universal rate of death and disability compensation.

31. Despite those positive developments, many issues required further consideration and scrutiny. With regard to reimbursement of troop-contributing countries, the Non-Aligned Movement had, in its communiqué dated 25 September 1997, expressed concern at the continued borrowing of money from the peacekeeping fund to finance the regular budget, resulting in delayed payments to troop-contributing countries, especially developing countries. The

non-aligned countries attached great importance to that issue, as it adversely affected their participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations.

32. With regard to the financing of peacekeeping operations, he reiterated that the United Nations must be given the necessary resources to finance all mandated programmes, including peacekeeping operations. That issue had been discussed in detail in the Special Committee at its 1997 session. In that connection, the non-aligned countries fully supported the views expressed in paragraph 81 of the Special Committee's report, and reiterated their regret that certain developed countries still had not paid their contributions in full, on time and without conditions. Such a situation was unacceptable to the non-aligned countries and was unfair to other Member States.

33. With regard to procurement practices, transparency should be a key factor in United Nations peacekeeping operations. Furthermore, priority should be given to procurement of goods and services of equivalent standard and price from developing countries. In that connection, the non-aligned countries welcomed the adoption of General Assembly resolution 51/231, particularly the views expressed in paragraph 26 thereof, and believed that in the awarding of peacekeeping procurement contracts, preference should be given to Member States that had fulfilled their financial obligations to the Organization.

34. While attaching importance to the holding of consultations, the non-aligned countries believed that the Security Council should formally include that practice within its rules of procedure. With regard to the rapid-deployment capacity of United Nations peacekeeping operations, they recognized the need to develop such capacity, and had therefore supported the establishment of the United Nations standby arrangements system. They also supported the views outlined in paragraph 79 of the Special Committee's report and believed that any efforts to enhance United Nations peacekeeping capabilities should be based on the further development of that system. Any proposals and measures in that regard should be submitted to the Special Committee, which had a mandate to review peacekeeping operations in all their aspects.

35. At the same time, the non-aligned countries were concerned at the separate arrangements initiated by some countries, ostensibly within the standby arrangements system. On the basis of available information, it appeared that the proposal to develop a standby high-readiness brigade was based on predetermined criteria, resulted in prearranged linkages among selected participants, and introduced conditionalities regarding the time limits of participation. That was contrary to the goal and spirit of the standby arrangements, which were open and all-inclusive, and which gave each Member of the United Nations an opportunity to indicate the level of support that it could provide and the pace at which it could do so. The standby-arrangements system was the result of serious consideration among Member States and did not impose any restrictions or predetermined requirements. Its merit lay in the fact that it afforded a multitude of options. Such options would be foreclosed if separate arrangements were arrived at within a select circle of participants, thus excluding the vast majority of United Nations Member States from participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations.

36. With regard to demining, he expressed concern, in the light of the recommendations contained in paragraph 65 of the Special Committee's report, at the transfer of demining activities from the Department of Humanitarian Affairs to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. He requested clarification from the Secretary-General as to how those humanitarian demining activities would be handled in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. He stressed moreover, that the mine-clearance policies, practices and activities established by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs should remain unaffected.

37. Peacekeeping operations were a critical component of the work of the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security. Member States must ensure that peacekeeping operations were established and deployed whenever the situation required and that they were as effective as possible. The countries on whose behalf he spoke reaffirmed their commitment to United Nations peacekeeping operations and their willingness to cooperate with the international community in addressing the above-mentioned issues and other related matters.

38. **Mr. Miyet** (Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations) said that the transfer of demining activities to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations would in no way lead to a decreased emphasis on that issue. All mandated programmes would be carried out and strengthened, and the merging within a single unit of specialists from the two Departments would undoubtedly ensure a more active role for the United Nations with regard to what might be termed the two cultures.

39. That issue often gave rise to certain misunderstandings; the Department of Peacekeeping Operations was not, as some believed, a military department, even though it had military personnel. It was somewhat paradoxical that the Chief of the Mine Clearance Unit in the Department of Humanitarian Affairs was a military officer,

while the Chief of the Demining Unit in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations was a representative of a humanitarian organization. Such a combination of functions and outlooks was extremely useful, and he would do everything possible to ensure, not only that nothing was "foreclosed", but that the United Nations could enhance its activities in that field.

40. With regard to the standby high-readiness brigade, the Department was open to all initiatives and ideas and regularly concluded new agreements with ministers and ambassadors of countries wishing to officially draw up agreements with the Department. In dealing with the question of establishing the standby brigade, the Department acted with complete impartiality and responded readily to initiatives put forward in that regard by countries. Of course, that process should take place in an atmosphere of complete openness and with the broadest possible dissemination of information among all Member States. It should be also pointed out that there was no secrecy in that regard and that the Secretariat conducted the broadest possible consultations in organizing operations.

41. The Department sought to ensure maximum transparency in the procurement procedures, since it was a question of the Organization's authority, the quality of work and the possibility of saving funds. Measures would be taken to enable developing countries to participate in that process. With regard to gratis personnel, he pointed out that the reduction in the numbers of such personnel should go hand in hand with the allocation of budgetary resources for hiring the permanent staff necessary for the Department's work. If that were not done, the Department's capability would be sharply reduced, which might lead to a situation in which there would be neither gratis personnel nor additional budget allocations and, as a result, the Department would be unable to discharge its duties. In that regard, it was necessary to ensure geographical balance and, in considering the Department's budget at the beginning of the following year, to see to it that the reduction in the number of gratis personnel was accompanied by parallel efforts to create conditions enabling the Department to function normally.

42. **Mr. Al-Hussein** (Jordan) said that his delegation shared the position of the movement of non-aligned countries expressed by the representative of Thailand on their behalf. Nevertheless, he wished to emphasize several points that were of special importance to Jordan.

43. It should be pointed out that the most recent comprehensive operation had been established two years earlier and that there was a real crisis of confidence among Member States concerning United Nations peacekeeping operations. His delegation, however, was gratified that the Organization was still studying and drawing lessons from previous operations, streamlining procedures, seeking to improve its rapid deployment capability and broadening the scope of discussions in the Special Committee. As the first Member State to have signed a memorandum of understanding with the Organization on standby arrangements, Jordan believed that the United Nations must continue to enhance its preparedness for any future contingency. He noted with satisfaction the efforts by the staff of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in that connection.

44. While his delegation welcomed the adoption of General Assembly resolutions 51/218 E and 51/243, it nevertheless believed that there were practical concerns which required the attention of and remedial action by the Secretariat: the inability of the United Nations to reimburse troop-contributing countries because some Member States had not paid their assessments in full and on time.

45. Although his delegation welcomed the progress made with regard to consultations between the Security Council and troop-contributing countries, it reiterated its call for the further improvement of those consultations, *inter alia*, by including the countries affected by the crises and situated in the regions concerned. Jordan also supported the statement made by the representative of Portugal on agenda item 11, that troop-contributing countries should actively participate in the early decision-making phase of the Security Council's deliberations on potential peacekeeping operations.

46. In conclusion, he expressed his delegation's support for the report of the Special Committee and hoped that the Secretariat would respond speedily to the proposals, requests and recommendations put forward in it. He also wished to pay tribute to the men and women in the field who had made the ultimate sacrifice for the sake of peace and welcomed the decision by the Secretariat to create the Dag Hammarskjöld medal for peacekeeping.

47. **Mr. Baltes** (Luxembourg), speaking on behalf of the European Union as well as the following associated countries, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, said that the European Union attached the greatest importance to United Nations peacekeeping operations. The contribution by the Union's member States constituted a third of the overall contributions to peacekeeping operations and in financial terms they covered more than 37 per cent of all expenditures for the Organization's peacemaking operations. In addition, the Union made a considerable

contribution to the conduct of operations carried out by other international organizations in accordance with mandates established by the Security Council.

48. In considering the question of peacekeeping operations, it was necessary to take account of the Organization's complicated financial situation: indebtedness relating to contributions for such operations amounted to $1.6 billion. As of March 1997, the Organization owed $800 million to 71 troop-contributing countries, half of which were member States of the European Union. That situation could not continue indefinitely and the European Union once again pointed out that Member States must carry out their financial obligations in full, on time and without conditions.

49. The European Union noted with satisfaction the constructive work by the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and believed that it would continue to be carried out in that spirit. The success of peacekeeping operations depended on the proper functioning of the mechanisms for ensuring cooperation between the civilian and military components of national and international organizations. In that connection, a comprehensive approach to the consideration, planning and implementation of both peacekeeping operations themselves and the entire range of related activities, including preventive diplomacy, the imposition of peace, peace-building, reconciliation and post-conflict recovery, was of great importance. Peacekeeping operations must have specific mandates, achievable objectives and clear command structures. The growing complexity of multifunctional operations made it necessary to enhance coordination between their various components as well as the corresponding subdivisions of the Organization. In light of the recently adopted decision of the Fifth Committee, the Department had to review its organizational structure, *inter alia*, in the field of planning, in order to make it possible to bring about a gradual reduction in the number of gratis personnel. In order to maintain the Department's operational potential, it was necessary to establish in a balanced way new posts financed by the Organization's budget.

50. The European Union attached importance to the closer involvement of countries providing troop contingents in the decision-making process in the Security Council. The holding of regular consultations between the Council and the countries concerned was of particular importance in that regard.

51. The Union supported the establishment and strengthening of the system of standby forces and the establishment of a rapid deployment headquarters at the Organization's Headquarters. It also noted with satisfaction the plans to set up a standby high-readiness brigade, which would make it possible to strengthen significantly the Organization's potential in the field of peacekeeping.

52. The European Union was unable not to support the Fifth Committee's request that the Secretariat should develop a logistic support concept which would serve in the future as the basis for all peacekeeping operations.

53. Regional organizations and arrangements, in particular the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), could make an important contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security. In that connection, the European Union noted the close cooperation with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) with a view to strengthening the conflict prevention mechanism established by that organization. Support should also be given to the Secretary-General's proposal to enhance preparedness for conflict resolution and peacekeeping in Africa, particularly by widening the participation of African countries in standby planning.

54. An increasing role in peacekeeping operations was being played by civilian police, who assisted local police forces in restoring public order, upholding the rule of law and promoting civil reconciliation. That was all the more important in that modern peacekeeping operations were not confined solely to peacekeeping activities, but also included humanitarian components. In that connection, the European Union hoped that the Civilian Police Unit within the Department would be strengthened and noted with satisfaction the statement by the President of the Security Council of 14 July 1997 (S/PRST/1997/38).

55. The European Union reiterated that the training of peacekeeping personnel must be carried out by Member States themselves. At the same time, the United Nations had an important role to play in supporting that activity. The European Union called on the Training Unit to continue its efforts to promote standard training norms for peacekeeping personnel.

56. The European Union also attached the utmost importance to the safety of peacekeeping personnel. Enhancing the safety of personnel would also contribute to the formation of more favourable public perceptions of the work of the United Nations in maintaining peace. In that connection, it must be ensured that all deployed personnel underwent the necessary training and received proper equipment.

57. The European Union reaffirmed that it attached the greatest importance to United Nations peacekeeping operations in all their aspects. The Organization must

enhance the effectiveness of its operations and strengthen its potential in that respect, while Member States had an obligation to provide the Organization with the necessary personnel and resources. The European Union would continue to work in that direction and hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

58. **Mr. Miyet** (Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations) said that the plan to reduce the number of gratis personnel should be seen in the context of the consideration of budgetary appropriations for the support account for peacekeeping operations, which would take place in spring 1998, so as to ensure a smooth transition and not undermine the Department's work. In that respect, efforts were being made to move forward as fast as possible, while taking into account the realities of the situation. A certain reduction of the number of gratis personnel had already taken place and a plan was being prepared for the interim period up to the time in spring 1998 when the consideration of the budget would begin and the establishment of posts would be proposed to replace gratis personnel, with full regard for the principle of equitable geographical distribution.

59. As to the question of strengthening the rapid deployment capacity of the Department (the Standby Forces High Readiness Brigade), there was no discrimination in that matter. The initiative had emanated from several countries, and the Department would study all initiatives in the framework of the stand-by arrangements. At the same time there was a plan for the establishment of a rapidly deployable mission headquarters on which work was currently under way. However, it had not been possible to mobilize sufficient resources. The rapidly deployable mission headquarters was open for participation by all countries and would be staffed by personnel whose posts would be financed either from voluntary or from assessed contributions. At the same time, the question should be studied within the framework of the discussion in spring 1998 on the support account for peacekeeping operations. The Department would make specific proposals in spring, taking into account the goal of reducing the numbers of gratis personnel and the need to create posts to ensure that the Department's basic functions were carried out, and the rapidly deployable mission headquarters would be part of that package of measures. That was the overall proposal, and meanwhile the Department would make every effort to ensure a smooth transition and protect the vitally important elements of the work of the Department.

60. **Mr. Qin Huasun** (China) said that over the past three years there had been a sharp reduction of United Nations peacekeeping operations in terms of their scope, personnel and expenses. Although the international community had a clearer understanding of the limitations of those operations, they remained an irreplaceable instrument of the United Nations for maintaining international peace and security. His delegation wished to share with the members of the Committee some of its observations on peacekeeping operations.

61. Observance of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, particularly the principle of respect for State sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs, was not only the basis on which the Organization relied but also the starting point of peacekeeping operations. The increasingly active involvement in the settlement of internal conflicts in countries should not be used as an excuse to interfere in their internal affairs. History had shown the effectiveness of such basic principles governing peacekeeping operations as obtaining prior consent from the parties concerned, observing strict neutrality, and non-use of force except for self-defence. Those principles should be strictly observed by multinational forces acting with the authorization of the Security Council, which should strengthen supervision of their activities to prevent any act that might jeopardize the reputation of the United Nations.

62. A stable financial basis was essential to the success of any peacekeeping operation, and the withholding of peacekeeping assessments by some Member States had not only brought tremendous difficulties to the conduct of peacekeeping operations but also dampened the enthusiasm of troop-contributing countries. As peacekeeping expenses drastically decreased, there was a corresponding decline in the expenses shared by each Member State, and China called on those countries to clear their arrears rapidly, in full and without conditions. No unilateral move in that respect, or financial arrangements which discriminated against developing countries, were acceptable to the Members of the Organization, including China.

63. As had been shown by recent experience in conducting peacekeeping operations, one of the key factors for their success was an advance definition of a clear and practicable mandate. In recent years, peacekeeping forces had often had to accept new tasks which exceeded their capabilities, and that had added to the difficulties of peacekeeping operations and often created confusion for personnel in the field. Peacekeeping operations were not a panacea for all conflicts and there should be a limit to their mandate. The General Assembly should continue to consider other methods of conflict resolution such as preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and post-conflict peace-building, beyond the category of peacekeeping operations.

64. Enhancing the rapid deployment capacity of peacekeeping operations was important from the point of view of effectively implementing the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and keeping situations under control. His delegation supported the efforts made by the Organization to enhance stand-by arrangements, and his Government had announced its readiness to participate in such arrangements. Noting that some countries were prepared to provide other types of forces to the United Nations, he said that source diversity of peacekeeping forces was an important factor marking the unique role of United Nations peacekeeping operations. Moreover, since most of the current conflicts were taking place in developing countries, it was important to ensure full participation by those countries in peacekeeping operations. China hoped that the potential of United Nations stand-by arrangements would be fully utilized with the participation of Member States and felt that, after consultation with Member States, new measures should be introduced to strengthen the rapid deployment capacity under the auspices of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations.

65. His delegation appreciated the measures the Department had taken to improve the efficiency of peacekeeping operations. It welcomed the decision of the Special Committee to apply uniform death and disability compensation to personnel from developing and developed countries and hoped that the Secretariat would implement that decision at an early date. However, it noted with regret that the Department was continuing to use many gratis personnel. His delegation welcomed General Assembly resolution 51/243 on that question, had taken note of the statement by the Secretary-General that a plan would be developed to phase out the use of gratis personnel and hoped that the plan would be implemented at the earliest possible date. It also hoped that the composition of the Department would fully take into consideration the principle of equitable geographical distribution and balance between developing and developed countries.

66. His Government favoured the strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations within the framework of Chapter VIII of the Charter. It had noticed in particular that African regional organizations, such as the Organization of African Unity (OAU), were playing an increasingly important role in preventing and resolving conflicts in the region. China had always attached great importance to African issues, and his Government supported the efforts of the relevant organizations and countries to resolve conflicts in the region independently. It hoped that the United Nations would provide more assistance to African countries and organizations to enhance Africa's capacity for preventing and resolving conflicts would coordinate the assistance provided to Africa by countries and organizations from other regions.

67. Peace and development were two issues which were inextricably linked, and many conflicts in the world were, in the final analysis, caused by questions of development. The United Nations, while attaching importance to peacekeeping operations, should make greater efforts to promote development and lift developing countries out of poverty as the only way truly to prevent conflicts and secure long-term stability and peace.

68. His delegation was pleased to note that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 51/136, the membership of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations had expanded, which would surely enhance its authority. It was of the view that all measures to enhance the efficiency and capability of peacekeeping operations should be subject to full consideration by the Committee and should be submitted to the General Assembly so as to ensure transparent and democratic decision-making.

69. **Mr. Sounna** (Niger) said that the United Nations had been founded in the aftermath of the Second World War with a view to creating stability in international relations and strengthening the foundation for peace. The Organization had used many different methods and mechanisms for conflict prevention or resolution, including peacekeeping forces, observer missions or fact-finding missions, missions of good offices, mediators and special representatives. The recent reductions in the scale of the use of peacekeeping forces had not had an impact on the effectiveness and authority of the United Nations, which continued to enjoy the confidence of Governments. Governments were turning more often to the International Court of Justice for settlement of their disputes. Many countries, including the Niger, had ratified the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty.

70. Many regional conflicts were being resolved with the support of the United Nations, in particular in the Great Lakes region of Africa, Angola and Western Sahara, where the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General was endeavouring to bring the positions of both parties closer together.

71. His Government supported the work of the United Nations in the interests of peace. It had offered its services to provide assistance in overcoming tense situations on the African continent, in particular in West Africa. Aside from good offices, the Niger had taken part in peacekeeping and

peace restoration operations. Its troop contingents had participated in the multinational force of Operation Desert Storm, in the United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR), and also, under the auspices of OAU, in Burundi and Liberia (under the aegis of ECOWAS). The Niger was strongly in favour of political solutions based on negotiations, multilateral cooperation and direct contacts. Lasting peace and security could be ensured if the roots of the conflict were eliminated with the help of political and economic means and mechanisms intended to create favourable conditions for development.

72. **Mr. Chaturvedi** (India) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement of the representative of Thailand on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

73. The United Nations had traditionally played an important role in the maintenance of international peace and security, and peacekeeping operations had been an innovation to which it had resorted in order to promote the principles and purposes of the Charter. In line with that commitment, over the years India had been among the major troop contributors. While his delegation was firmly convinced of the need for peacekeeping, it believed that such operations could not be a substitute for sustained economic growth and development, which were the essential ingredients for durable peace.

74. India had always held that peacekeeping was non-military in character, even if military personnel were involved. Hence, peacekeeping operations must have the consent of the parties and must not intrude in the internal affairs of Governments. Moreover, they must not be a substitute for a negotiated political settlement, and their mandates must be of limited duration.

75. Current trends in peacekeeping must necessarily have an impact on theory and practice. Recently, the number of "blue helmets" had continued to decrease. In addition, the number of ad hoc peacekeeping coalitions for the settlement of disputes had grown. Yet the amounts owed to troop-contributing countries at the end of 1997 would total $907 million, a considerably higher amount than that at the end of 1996.

76. He wondered whether the need for peacekeeping had declined or whether countries were no longer as committed to collective security within the framework of the United Nations. That could indicate a separation of the legislative and executive roles relating to the maintenance of international peace and security, with the former role belonging to the Security Council and the latter role being transferred to the aforementioned ad hoc coalitions for them to pursue their own goals. Such fundamental concerns must be addressed by all Member States so that any action would be based on shared premises.

77. On the subject of progress made in 1997, he welcomed the adoption of General Assembly resolution 51/243 on the phasing out of gratis personnel and expressed the hope that the anomalous practice would cease once and for all. He also welcomed the adoption of General Assembly resolution 51/218 E, which contained provisions on uniform death and disability compensation for troops, and Security Council resolution 1121 (1997) instituting the Dag Hammarskjöld Medal. Each of those resolutions in its own way paid homage to those who had laid down their lives while serving the United Nations.

78. Member States must provide the United Nations with the necessary means to perform those tasks which they themselves had entrusted to it. All must therefore ensure that their assessed contributions were paid in full, on time and without preconditions. India had demonstrated its commitment not only by promptly paying its contributions in full, but by showing understanding for delays in reimbursements for troop contingents. There was a danger, however, that the financial burden resulting from long delays would force countries to reduce their support to peacekeeping operations.

79. It appeared that the phase of active involvement of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security was drawing to a close. As the Secretary-General had stated in his report on the work of the Organization, the United Nations was preparing itself to counter new transnational threats. He hoped that the Organization, when addressing organized crime, drug trafficking and terrorism, which posed threats to national security, economic development, democracy and sovereignty, would display the same activism as it had displayed in peacekeeping operations. His Government, for its part, would continue its commitment to international efforts in all those spheres.

80. **Mr. Abdulai** (Ghana) said that his delegation wished to associate itself with the statement made by the representative of Thailand on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

81. Ghana had begun to participate in United Nations peacekeeping operations in the very first years after gaining independence, and it was currently the world's ninth largest troop contributor. His delegation was therefore pleased that the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations had admitted Ghana as a full member in accordance with General Assembly resolution 51/136. Ghana pledged to do its utmost to contribute to the work of the Special Committee.

82. His delegation was satisfied with the work of the Special Committee. In its report (A/52/209), the Special Committee not only reaffirmed the guiding principles for peacekeeping operations but also made important recommendations, some of which had been reflected in General Assembly resolutions 51/243 and 51/218 E. Ghana was grateful to the Special Committee for its contribution to resolving the thorny issues addressed in those resolutions.

83. Regrettably, the practice of borrowing from the peacekeeping account had continued unabated. Ghana shared the view on that matter expressed by the Secretary-General in paragraph 114 of his programme for reform (A/51/950), and hoped that the General Assembly would seriously address that question when considering the reform proposals. The practice sometimes hindered participation by small developing countries who wished to contribute their widow's mite to the common cause of maintaining international peace and security. His delegation therefore appealed once again to those States with chronic arrears to help move United Nations reform forward by acquitting themselves of their financial obligations on time and without preconditions.

84. He drew attention to the need for transparency in the procurement of goods and services for peacekeeping operations, and urged that, when contracts for such goods and services were awarded, preference should be given to troop-contributing countries, particularly when their own personnel were concerned.

85. Ghana endorsed the concept of standby arrangements and had been one of the first countries to satisfy the conditions for full participation in that system. It hoped that the system would continue to develop and improve and that more Member States would take concrete steps towards participation in it. Through the system, the rapid deployment capacity of peacekeeping operations could be greatly enhanced, and the Secretariat, in addressing that question, would need to consider the extent to which it could assist the developing countries participating in such operations with the logistical supplies and training necessary to improve their rapid deployment capacities in order to meet the needs of peacekeeping operations.

86. In selecting participants for United Nations missions, the Secretariat should continue to observe the principles of impartiality and objectivity, and consultations on the matter should be broad-based so that all Member States wishing to fulfil their obligations under the Charter had an equal opportunity so to do.

87. **Mr. Amin-Mansour** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his delegation endorsed the statement made by the representative of Thailand. Over the past year, there had been a reduction both in the number of personnel involved in peacekeeping operations and in the size of such operations, which was attributable either to the streamlining or to changes in the political environment. His delegation considered that a reduction in the costs of peacekeeping operations provided an opportunity to allocate additional resources to addressing the problems that hampered development activities and were the root cause of many conflicts. Clearly defined rules of engagement and a code of conduct for peacekeepers, as well as the formulation of guidelines for national training, were of fundamental importance in ensuring that peacekeeping forces discharged their mandates appropriately.

88. With regard to the question of loaned or gratis personnel, his delegation welcomed the plan, contained in the Secretary-General's report (A/51/950), for phasing out the use of gratis personnel and viewed that measure as a positive step towards improving the composition of the staff of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Another positive development had been the adoption of General Assembly resolution 51/218 E, which provided for a system of self-insurance and the establishment of uniform and standardized rates for the payment of awards in cases of death or disability sustained by troops in the service of the United Nations peacekeeping operations.

89. Non-payment of contributions adversely affected various aspects of peacekeeping operations, including their effectiveness and the swift reimbursement of expenses incurred by Member States contributing troops or equipment, particularly developing countries. In that regard, the existing special scale of assessments established by the General Assembly in its resolution 3101 (XXVIII) of 11 December 1973, which took account of the special responsibility of the five permanent members of the Security Council, must be observed.

90. His delegation cautiously took note of the new initiatives regarding the establishment of a mechanism for early warning and preventive deployment and a rapidly deployable mission headquarters. While the outbreak of conflicts and their destructive consequences were a source of concern to many Governments, including his own, the financial and other negative implications of such a mechanism obliged his Government to remain cautious. Moreover, it was necessary to ensure that the functioning of such mechanisms did not run counter to the principles of international law in general and the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations in particular.

91. His delegation strongly supported the idea of actively involving troop-contributing countries in relevant consultations and discussions held by the Security Council. If that idea was put into practice, and if there was also greater transparency in the Council's work, States that were not members of the Council would be encouraged to step up their efforts towards maintaining peace and security.

92. It was extremely important to observe a number of principles either contained in the Charter or established on the basis of the invaluable experience gained in previous peacekeeping operations. Those principles were respect for territorial integrity, political independence and sovereignty, non-use of force except in self defence, non-interference in internal affairs, impartiality and the gaining of the consent of the warring parties. Security Council resolutions establishing peacekeeping operations must include, in clear terms, their defined mandates, objectives, command structure and financing in order to ensure that efforts to achieve peaceful solutions to conflicts produced results. Finally, his delegation supported the Special Committee's recommendation to devote part of the first day of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly to a commemorative meeting to mark the fiftieth anniversary of peacekeeping operations.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.